

# NEWS RELEASE

**OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY  
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS**

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***For Immediate Release***

**MARCH 9, 2005**

Ronald J. Tenpas, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Illinois, announced today that on March 8, 2005, **LANTER COMPANY**, pled guilty to the federal offenses of **TRANSPORTATION OF POULTRY PRODUCTS IN COMMERCE THAT WERE MISBRANDED**, in violation of Title 21, United States Code, Section 458(a)(2) and **TRANSPORTATION OF POULTRY PRODUCTS IN COMMERCE NOT PROPERLY INSPECTED**, in violation of Title 21, United States Code, Section 458(a)(2). The offenses each carry a total maximum statutory penalty of a fine of up to \$400,000, and up to five (5) years' probation. Sentencing has been set for July 1, 2005. Edward Wuebbels, the operations manager for Lanter Company, has previously entered a plea of guilty to federal offenses surrounding the same incident.

**LANTER COMPANY** is a trucking/warehouse/distribution company in Granite City, Illinois. Lanter was under contract with the Illinois State Board of Education to store and deliver United States Department of Agriculture commodity food products to schools in the State of Illinois. As part of the plea, **LANTER COMPANY** admitted that the company caused the illegal reboxing and repackaging of commodities chicken that were misbranded with false labeling, and the transportation of the commodities chicken that had not been properly inspected. Some of the boxes of illegally reboxed commodities chicken were served to school children at the Laraway Elementary School in Will County, Illinois, which caused over 150 school children and teachers to become ill and required over 40 children and faculty to be transported by ambulance to area hospitals. As part of the plea, **LANTER COMPANY** has agreed to make a community restitution payment to the Laraway School District and will pay restitution to individual victims that have not yet been compensated.

The United States Department of Agriculture has, as one of its responsibilities, the safety of meat, poultry, and egg products. The Food Safety and Inspection Service is the public health agency in the United States Department of Agriculture responsible for ensuring that the nation's commercial supply of meat, poultry, and egg products is safe, wholesome, and correctly labeled and packaged. If you think you or others became ill from eating the same food, please report this outbreak to your local (city or county) health department. For additional food safety information about meat, poultry, or egg products, call the toll-free USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-888-MPHotline (1-888-674-6854); for the hearing-impaired (TTY) 1-800-256-7072. For complaints about food products which do not contain meat or poultry -- such as cereal -- call or write to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The FDA's Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition can be reached at 1-888-723-3366.

The Indictment follows an investigation conducted by the United States Department of Agriculture, Office of Inspector General-Investigations; the United States Department of Agriculture, Food Safety Inspection Service; and the United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Drug Administration. The prosecution of the case is being handled by Assistant United States Attorney Norman R. Smith.